Faunitaxys

Revue de Faunistique, Taxonomie et Systématique
morphologique et moléculaire

Volume 12
Numéro 13

Mars 2024

ISSN (Print) : 2269 - 6016
ISSN (Online) : 2970 - 4960
Dépôt légal : Mars 2024

Faunitaxys

Revue de Faunistique, Taxonomie et Systématique
morphologique et moléculaire

ZooBank : https://zoobank.org/79A36B2E-F645-4F9A-AE2B-ED32CE6771CC

Directeur de la publication, rédacteur, conception graphique et PAO:
Lionel Delaunay

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La parution de *Faunitaxys* est apériodique

Faunitaxys est indexé dans / ***Faunitaxys*** is indexed in:

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Imprimée sur les presses de SPEED COPIE, 6, rue Tréfilerie, F- 42100 Saint-Etienne

Imprimé le 27 03 2024

Faunitaxys, **12**(**13**), 2024 : 1 – 7.
https://doi.org/10.57800/faunitaxys-12(13)

An exceptional new genus of fossil scorpion from Burmese Cretaceous amber belonging to the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015

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Keywords:

scorpion;
Palaeoburmesebuthidae;
Paranotaburmesebuthus;
schmidti;
taxonomy;
new genus;
new species;
description;
fossil;
paranota;
amber;
Myanmar;
Burmite.

Abstract. – An exceptional new genus and species of fossil scorpion, *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **gen**. **n**., **sp**. **n**., is described from the Cretaceous amber of Myanmar (Burma). This is the fourth genus of fossil scorpion from Burmite described in the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015. The new genus is characterized by a combination of several morphological features and in particular by the presence of lateral extensions in tergites I to VI recalling paranota. The description of the new genus and species suggests new evidence on the phylogenetic position of certain Burmite amber scorpions and confirms, once again, the considerable degree of diversity in the Burmese amber-producing forests.

Lourenço W. R. & Velten J., 2024. – An exceptional new genus of fossil scorpion from Burmese Cretaceous amber belonging to the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015. *Faunitaxys*, 12(13): 1 – 7.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.57800/faunitaxys-12(13)

ZooBank: https://zoobank.org/12A85C51-AC9F-4C47-80DA-3096683F1BFB

Received: 14/03/2024 – *Revised*: 26/03/2024 – *Accepted*: 26/03/2024

Introduction

In previous publications and in particular in two synopses concerning all the scorpions trapped in amber (Lourenço, 2016, 2023), it was systematically affirmed that among the fossil arthropods found in amber, scorpions remain rare. This statement still stands as true for the scorpions found in certain types of amber as for example those originated from Mexico, Dominican Republic and Baltic (Lourenço, 2023). In Baltic amber for instance, the number of scorpions found remains quite limited, even if the initial discoveries are very old and go back to the early 19th century (see Lourenço & Weitschat, 1996). Besides, the diversity of the Baltic amber scorpions is quite limited with all species and genera being accommodate in a single family, previously the Buthidae C. L. Koch, 1837, and now more precisely in the Ananteridae Pocock, 1900.

The scenario presented by the Burmite scorpion fauna appears as quite different. The original discovery and description of a Burmite scorpion goes back only to a little more than 20 years when *Palaeoburmesebuthus grimaldii* Lourenço, 2002 was described (Lourenço, 2002). Since that original description more and more specimens from Burmite became available leading to an increasing number of new studies which brought more and more information on this Cretaceous scorpion fauna attesting of its remarkable diversity (see Lourenço, 2023 for a synopsis).

The elements of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015 represented the pioneer material to be discovered and described. At the same time, in more recent years, a form of inflation in the number of elements associated to this family led to a multiplication of new descriptions, in some cases performed by weakly-qualified taxonomists, which brought an addition of problems for future identifications (see Lourenço, 2023 for comments). The elements of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae remain on themselves a major challenge for precise identifications. This type of impasse led the senior author not to describe news species in both genera *Palaeoburmesebuthus* and *Betaburmesebuthus* during several years (Lourenço, 2018; Lourenço & Rossi, 2017), and only recently a new particular species of *Betaburmesebuthus* was again described (Lourenço & Velten, 2023).

The family Palaeoburmesebuthidae is composed of three genera, *Palaeoburmesebuthus* Lourenço, 2002, *Betaburmesebuthus* Lourenço, 2015 and *Spinoburmesebuthus* Lourenço, 2017. At present, a very peculiar new specimen of Burmite scorpion, almost complete and presenting quite unique characters, leads to the description of one more new genus and new species belonging to this family which now contains four genera. Once again, the considerable degree of scorpion diversity in the Burmese amber-producing forests is confirmed.

Material and methods

The new specimen investigated at present is preserved in a very clear block of pale yellow amber measuring 44 x 22 x 3/4 mm. The piece shows a small scorpion, which however is probably an adult, in account of the pectines development. These same pectines clearly indicate that the scorpion is a male. During the fossilisation process the ventral aspect of the scorpion was dislocated (tired-up), however, most

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major character can yet be clearly observed. These include almost all trichobothria, eyes, sternum, genital operculum, pectines and spiracles. Carinae, granulations and cutting edge of pedipalp fingers can equally be well observed. The schematic drawings provided here are interpretations of what was observable. Illustrations and measurements were produced with the aid of a Wild M5 stereomicroscope equipped with a drawing tube and an ocular micrometer. Measurements follow Stahnke (1970) and are given in mm. Morphological terminology mostly follows Hjelle (1990). Trichobothrial notations follow Vachon (1974, 1975). Trichobothria were definitely recorded only when their bothria (areoles) could be observed. Other trichobothria may be suggested by the presence of transverse hairs. Cheliceral notations are those of Vachon (1963).

The evolution of paranota in arthropods

Since some characters of the new genus and species show similarities with paranota, it seems useful to bring some comments about the definition and evolutionary significance of these structures.

According to Kukalova-Peck (1978), paranota are lateral expansions of the terga which, in numerous arthropods, serve as protection for the sides of the body and limbs. They are described in trilobites, crustaceans, acarina and myriapods. In insects, they are typically developed on the terga of Apterygota. Paranota are primitive, may possess venation, and may even develop a simple hinge along a desclerotized line so that they may become movable up and down to some extent (as the leg-protecting devices of galumnid mites). Paranota of silverfish strongly resemble, in general morphology and tracheation pattern, those of immobilized wing pads in older pterygote nymphs. The recapitulation principle, as well as these data of comparative morphology, seemingly favors homology between pterygote wings and thoracic paranota of the Apterygota, naturally out of any phylogenetic considerations. The theories leading to the evolution of wings in insects are often associated to paranota; however these are out of the scope of the present study (Hasenfuss, 2008; Ross, 2017).

Paranota are globally unknown in Arachnida, including scorpions, both on fossil and extant forms. For some buthids, such as *Hottentotta conspersus* (Thorell, 1876) from Southern Africa, some diminutive expansions resembling 'pseudo-paranota' may be observed (pers. obs.).

Systematic treatment

Superfamily **Buthoidea** C. L. Koch, 1837

Family **Palaeoburmesebuthidae** Lourenço, 2015

Genus ***Paranotaburmesebuthus*** Lourenço **gen. n.**

ZooBank: https://zoobank.org/7997691B-5D51-416D-8EF9-6004896A2983

Type species. – *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **sp. n.**

Diagnosis for the new genus. – The general morphology shows several characteristics also present in the other three genera of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae, but equally in a number of extant buthoid scorpions. A combination of characters can be used to diagnose the new genus from the other buthoid genera previously found in Burmite: A small global size compared to the other genera of the family Palaeoburmesebuthidae with a total length of 10.85 mm, for what can be presumed as an adult male. The specimen is moderately slender with shorter metasoma, telson and pedipalps when compared to other species of Palaeoburmesebuthidae. Carapace moderately granulated; anterior margin with a weak to moderate emargination; posterior median carinae terminating distally in a small spinoid process that extends beyond the posterior margin of the carapace (as in some extant buthids: e. g. *Compsobuthus* Vachon, 1949). Sternum semi-pentagonal. Tergites with one median carina and two strongly marked lateral carinae; tergites I and II with two additional lateral carinae, weakly marked, recalling those of the genus *Leiurus* Ehrenberg, 1828. Presence in tergites I to VI of lateral extensions recalling small paranota. Sternites almost smooth with small rounded spiracles. Metasomal segments I to III with 10 carinae; segment IV with 8 carinae; segment V with 5 carinae; telson moderately long with only some minute spinoid granules; subaculear tooth absent; setation on metasomal segments moderately to strongly marked. Fixed and movable fingers of pedipalp chela with 9-10 series of rounded granules separated by more conspicuous accessory granules. Genital operculum formed by two oval-plates. Pectines short and bulk with 12-11 teeth; fulcra absent. Trichobothrial pattern similar to those of extant buthid type A (Vachon 1974); the dorsal trichobothria of femur in alpha disposition (Vachon, 1975). At least 4 internal, 2 external and five dorsal trichobothria can be observed in the femur; 1 internal and 5 dorsal trichobothria on patella; ventral totally absent; most external trichobothria can be suggested on patella by the presence of fine setae; 5-6 dorso-external and two ventral on chelal hand and 6 on fixed finger can clearly be observed. Tibial spurs present on legs III and IV; reduced on III.

Etymology. – The new generic name refers to the presence of lateral extensions in tergites, recalling paranota, in association with Burma and the genus *Buthus* Leach, 1815.

Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti Lourenço **sp. n.**

(Fig. 1 - 18)

ZooBank: https://zoobank.org/667652BF-716C-443B-B545-EF6DD6295E50

Holotype. – Most certainly an adult male.

Type locality and horizon. – Myanmar (Burma), Kachin; precise locality unknown; Lower Cretaceous.

Patronym. – Specific name honours Mr. André Schmidt, (4800 Zofingen, Switzerland) who supported the present study.

Depository. – The type specimen is deposited in the Collection of Mr André Schmidt (4800 Zofingen, Switzerland).

Diagnosis for the new species. – The same as for the genus.

Description

Coloration. – The scorpion is yellow to pale-yellow; carapace, tergites and metasomal segments yellowish; pedipalps and legs yellow to pale-yellow. Ventral aspect and in particular pectines pale-yellow. Body and appendages may present some minor darker zones.

Morphology. – Carapace strongly elongated and moderately granular; anterior margin with a weak to moderate concavity. Carinae weakly to moderately marked; furrows weak. Median ocular tubercle well marked; median eyes large in size; three small lateral eyes; sternum subpentagonal. Mesosomal tergites weakly to moderately granular; tergites I to VI with three well marked carinae; tergites I and II with two additional lateral carinae; VII with five moderately to strongly marked carinae. Presence on tergites I to VI of lateral extensions recalling paranota. Pectines short and bulk with 12-11 teeth; fulcra absent. Sternites weakly granular, with small rounded spiracles. Metasomal segments with 10-10-10-8-5 carinae; intermediate carinae incomplet on segment III; dorsal carinae with one anterior spinoid granule on segments I and II; setation on all segments strongly marked. Telson moderately long, with minute spinoid granules; subaculear tooth absent. Cheliceral dentition similar to that defined for buthoids (Vachon, 1963). Pedipalp femur pentacarinate; patella with 6-7 carinae; internal face of femur and patella with a few spinoid granules. Chela with weakly marked carinae; all faces weakly granular to smooth. Fixed and movable fingers each with 9-10 series of rounded granules separated by stronger accessory granules; extremity of fingers with one stronger spinoid granule; setation of pedipalps weak to absent. Trichobothrial pattern ressembling those of extant buthid type A (Vachon 1974); the dorsal trichobothria of femur with a alpha disposition (Vachon, 1975); refer to diagnosis for further details. Tibial spurs present on legs III and IV; reduced on III.

Morphometric values (mm), holotype of *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço, **sp. n.**

– ***Total length*** 10.85 (including telson).

– ***Carapace***
  length 1.47;
  anterior width 0.77;
  posterior width 1.21.

– ***Mesosoma*** length 2.47.

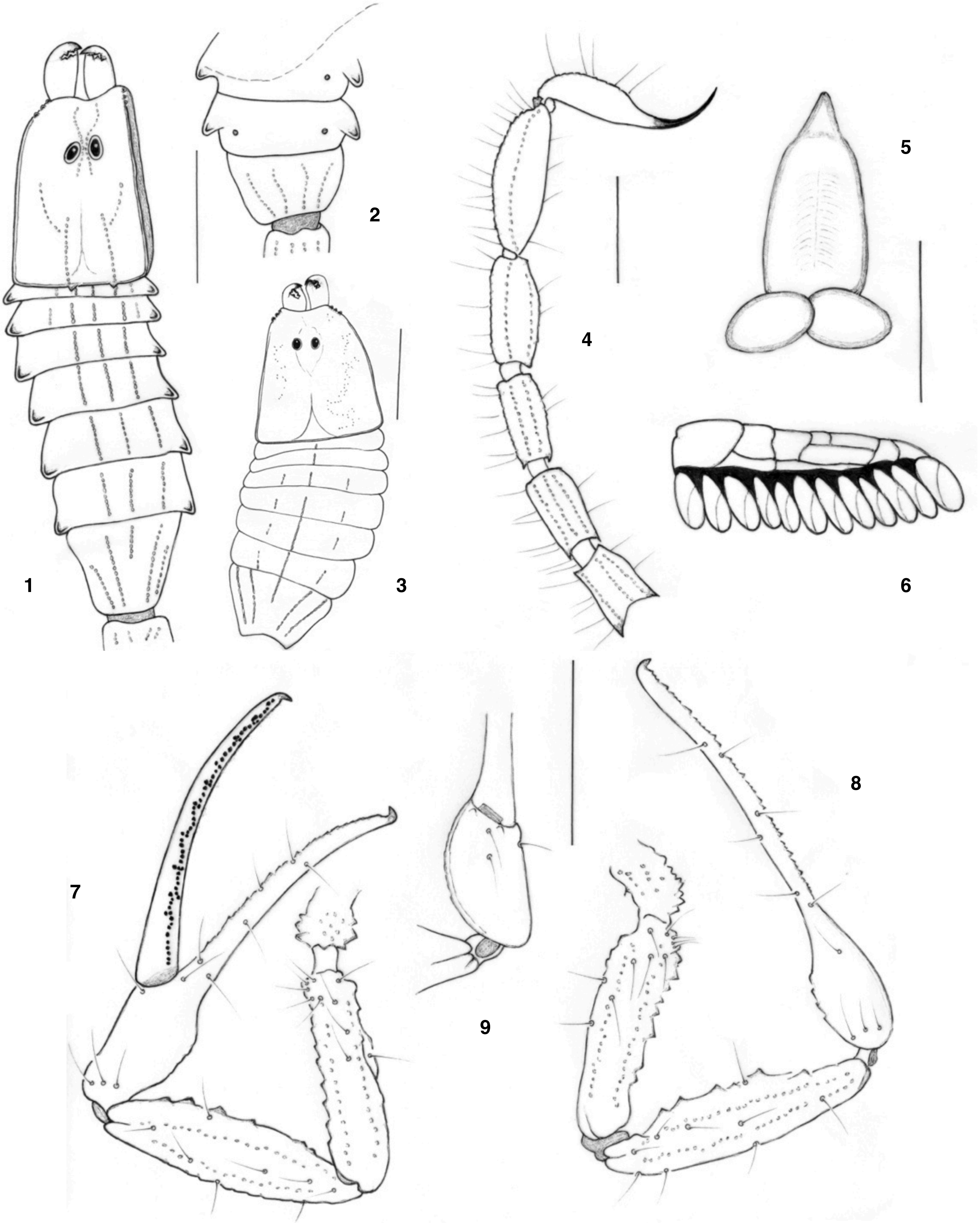


Fig. **1-9**. *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **sp**. **n**. Adult male holotype.

1. Carapace, chelicerae and tergites with lateral extensions. **2**. Sternites V to VII equally showing lateral extensions and spiracles. **3**. Comparatively, carapace, chelicerae and tergites in male holotype of *Betaburmesebuthus kobberti* Lourenço, 2015 (scale bars = 1 mm). **4**. Metasomal segments I to V and telson, lateral aspect. **5**. Sternum and genital operculum. **6**. Pecten (scale bars, 4 = 1 mm; 5-6 = 0.5 mm). **7-9**. Trichobothrial pattern. **7-8**. Left and right pedipalps, dorsal aspect, showing trichobothria on femur, patella and chela. **9**. Left pedipalp chela, ventral aspect with trichobothria (scale bar = 1 mm).

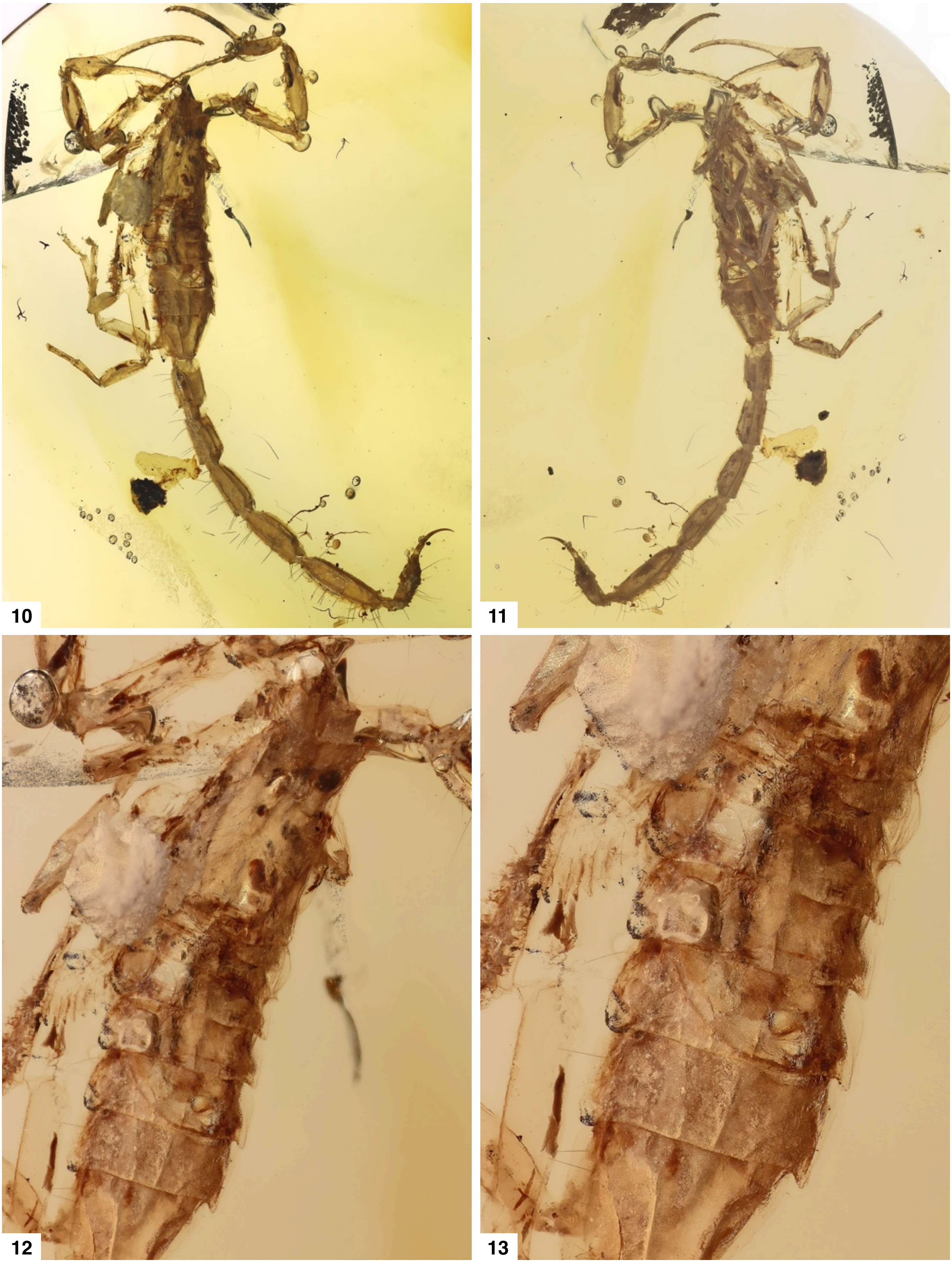


Fig. 10-13. *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **sp. n.** Adult male holotype.

10. Habitus, dorsal aspect. **11**. Habitus, ventral aspect. **12**. Carapace and tergites showing lateral extensions. **13**. Tergites with extensions, in detail.

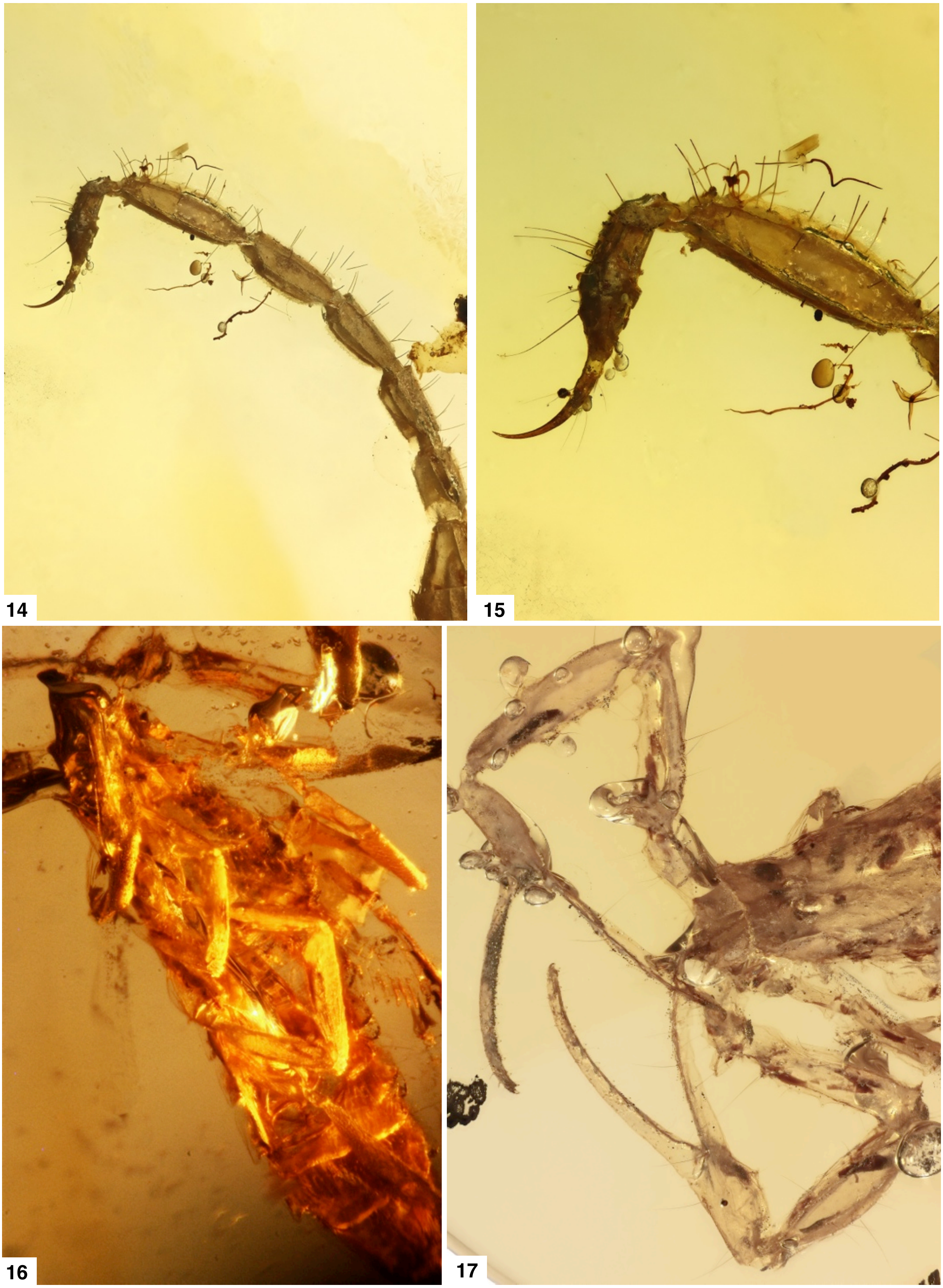
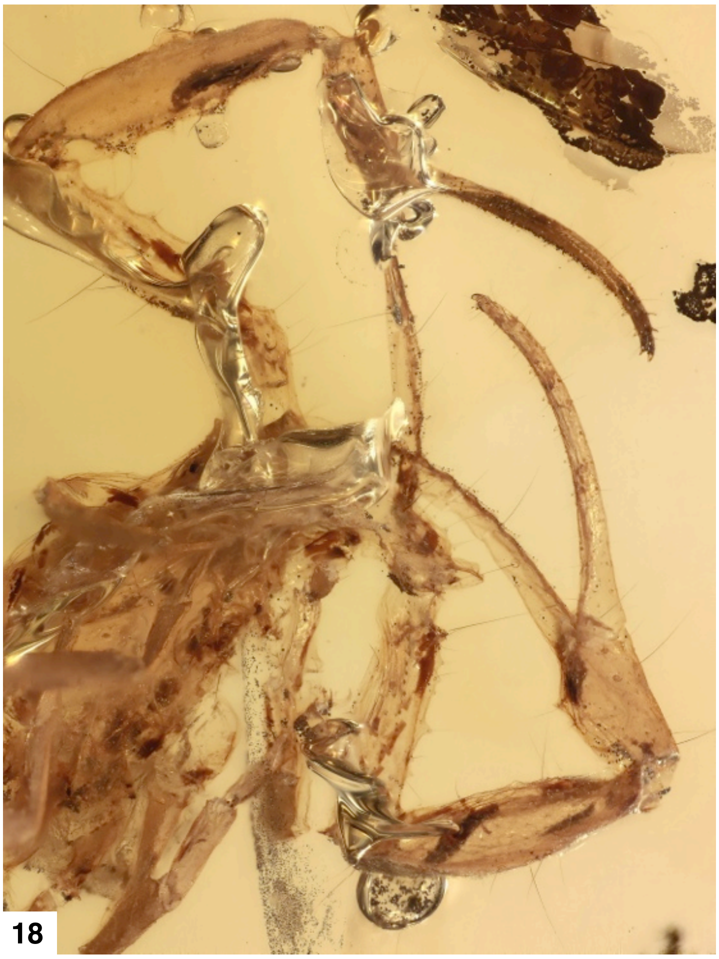


Fig. 14 - 17. *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **sp**. **n**. Adult male holotype.

14. Metasomal segments and telson, lateral aspect. **15**. Metasomal segment V and telson in detail. **16**. Latero-ventral aspect of sternites with pecten on the right. **17**. Carapace and pedipalps, dorsal aspect.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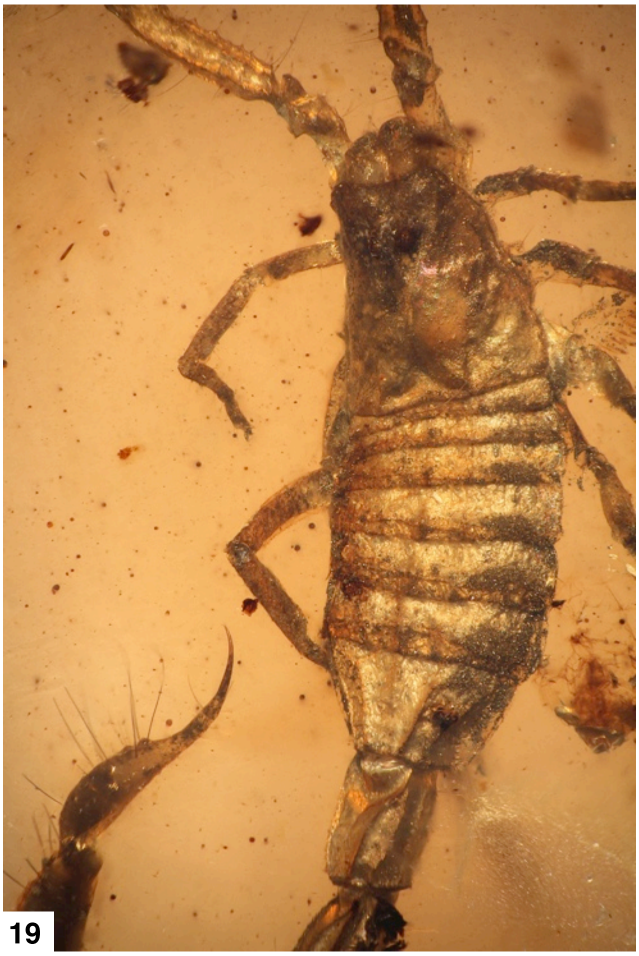
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Fig. **18**. *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **sp**. **n**. Adult male holotype. Carapace and pedipalps, ventral aspect.

Fig. **19**. *Betaburmesebuthus kobberti* Lourenço, male holotype. Carapace and tergites without lateral extensions.

– ***Metasomal segments***
I: length 0.81, width 0.54;
II: length 0.87, depth 0.50;
III: length 0.94, depth 0.49;
IV: length 1.11, depth 0.48;
V: length 1.54, depth 0.47.

– ***Telson*** length 1.64.

– ***Vesicle*** depth 0.41.

– ***Pedipalp***
femur length 1.21, width 0.34;
patella length 1.41, width 0.41;
chela length 2.17, width 0.31, depth 0.41.

– ***Movable finger*** length 1.61.

Acknowledgements

We are most grateful Alexander Beigel (Aachen, Germany) for the preparation of most of the photos which illustrated the new species.

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Authors contribution [1]

Publisher Correspondence. – WL
Writing the article. – WL
Description. – WL
Article proofreading. – WL
Bibliographic work. – WL
Material study. – WL & JV
Author of the figures. – WL (Fig. 1-9) & JV (Fig. 16)

[1] **WL** = Wilson R. Lourenço – **JV** = Jürgen Velten

Résumé

Lourenço W. R. & Velten J., 2024. – Un nouveau genre exceptionnel de l'ambre Crétacé de Myanmar appartenant à la famille des Paleoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015. *Faunitaxys*, 12(13): 1 – 7.

Un nouveau genre et une nouvelle espèce exceptionnels de scorpion fossile, *Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti* Lourenço **gen**. **n**., **sp**. **n**., sont décrits de l'ambre Crétacé de Myanmar. Le nouveau genre est le quatrième décrit pour la famille des Palaeoburmesebuthidae Lourenço, 2015. Le nouveau genre est caractérisé par un ensemble de structures morphologiques distinctes et en particulier par la présence d'extensions latérales au niveau des tergites I à VI, rappelant des paranota. La description du nouveau genre apporte des informations nouvelles sur la possible position phylogénétique des scorpions provenant de l'ambre Crétacé du Myanmar et confirme une fois de plus la très importante diversité retrouvée dans l'ambre Crétacé de Myanmar.

Mots-clés. – scorpion, Palaeoburmesebuthidae, *Paranotaburmesebuthus*, *schmidti*, taxonomie, nouveau genre, nouvelle espèce, description, fossile, paranota, ambre, Crétacé, Myanmar.

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Illustration de la couverture :

Paranotaburmesebuthus schmidti Lourenço **sp**. **n**. in the stone (piece of amber).

Crédits:

Wilson R. Lourenço: Fig. 1-9.
Alexander Beigel: Fig. 10-15, 17-19 & couverture.
Jürgen Velten: Fig. 16.

Publié par l'Association Française de Cartographie de la Faune et de la Flore (AFCFF)